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SECRET--ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES IN THE INNER MONGOLIAN
AUTONOMOUS REGION, COMMUNIST CHINA

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ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES IN THE INNER MONGOLIAN
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A series of administrative changes appears to have occurred recently in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region of Communist China (IMAR). In the east, the special district-level units* of Hu-lun-pei-erh, Cho-li-mu, and Chao-wu-ta have apparently been taken from IMAR and subordinated to Hei-lung-chiang, Chi-lin (Kirin), and Liao-ning provinces, respectively. In the west, about two-thirds of Pa-yen-nao-erh has been detached from IMAR, part being assigned to Kan-su and part subordinated to the Ning-hsia Hui Autonomous Region (see Map 78287).

Communist China has made similar changes in recent years without either formal pronouncement or publication of revised administrative unit lists. Consequently, it is usually some time before changes of this nature become known outside the country. For example, the 1967 elevation of T'ien-chin, former capital of Ho-pei Province, to a province level city directly under the Central Government was not generally known outside of China until 1969. It is believed that the IMAR administrative modifications recently noted were made in the summer or autumn of 1969. Provincial propaganda broadcasts in mid-August of that year provided the first indications of the new subordination of the three eastern leagues, and subsequent reports [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] confirmed these decisions as well as those that affected Pa-yen-nao-erh in the west. Still, however, there has been no official pronouncement concerning the current administrative structure of IMAR and no recent maps have been received to provide confirmatory evidence.

These administrative changes most likely were motivated by military considerations brought about by the 1969 Sino-Soviet border incidents and the continuing buildup of Soviet ground

* Called "leagues" in Inner Mongolia.

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Inner Mongolia Administrative Changes: Presumed boundaries



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and air units in Mongolia. Inner Mongolia constitutes one of the Chinese Army's 13 territorial commands. Since jurisdictional areas of the Communist Party, the Government, and the army are ordinarily consistent in Communist China and coincide with province boundaries, similar changes probably have been, or will be, made in the military region boundaries. Such changes would place the entire eastern Sino-Soviet border areas under the single command of the Shou-yang Military Region. Presumably, Lan-chou Military Region would incorporate the Pa-yen-nao-erh area, a step which would place responsibility for the Shuang-cheng-tzu Missile Test Center on the military commander who is in the best position to defend it. The remaining central IMAR area may now be subordinated to the Peking Military Region. If so, it would probably be designated a military district, making it equivalent to those of Ho-pei and Shan-hsi, thus reducing the number of territorial commands to 12.

In addition to improving the defensive organization, these changes greatly simplify the civil administration of IMAR. All of the three eastern league seats are closer (at distances of 150 to 425 miles) to their new provincial capitals than they are to Hu-ho-hao-t'e, the IMAR capital. Furthermore, each league seat is now connected more or less directly with its provincial capital by rail and highways, thus reversing the situation that prevailed when they were subordinate to the Hu-ho-hao-t'e. It may be that, in conduct of provincial affairs, top officials travel by air from province capitals to subordinate seats of government. If so, the savings in time and distance under the new organization are apparent, as these three eastern leagues stretch the length of the Greater Khingan mountain range. Finally, the length, size, and diverse economic character of IMAR, as it was previously constituted, tended to militate against effective provincial-level economic integration.

It will be noted on the accompanying map that the southernmost part of Hu-lun-pei-erh, as originally constituted, is shown as part of Chi-lin rather than Hei-ling-chiang. This is the area of K'o-erh-ch'in Yu-i-ch'ien Ch'i and T'u-ch'uan Hsien.* By assigning this area to Chi-lin, all of the Khorchin ethnic minority groups are united under the Che-li-mu, which has three other Khorchin county level units.

* "Ch'i," referred to as "banners" in English, are county level units unique to IMAR; elsewhere in China they are called "hsien."

Perhaps the greatest economic consequence of the reorganization thus far is the incorporation of all of the large coniferous forest area of the Greater Khingan Range within the lumber producing Hei-lung-chiang Province. The loss of the western area, consisting of barren sand and gravel country, probably would have no impact on IMAR's economy. The main industrial/agricultural core, along the northern bend of the Yellow River and as far east as Chi-ning, remains unchanged. Hence IMAR, while smaller in area than before, continues to retain intact the productive heart of its regional economy.

Presumably previous administrative unit changes have been made to facilitate unified military control over strategic regions adjacent to international borders. Several counties were transferred from Kwang-tung to Kwang-hsi in 1965, at a time when that area was assuming importance as a corridor for the transport of military supplies to North Vietnam.

IMAR's piecemeal dismemberment is in consonance with its piecemeal formation. Created by the Chinese Communists in 1947 from territory taken from the Chinese Nationalists, IMAR was designated as an "autonomous region," at province level, to give nominal recognition to its ethnic groups. As more territory was "liberated," it developed into an irregular, crescent shaped area that spanned more than 29 degrees of longitude and 15 degrees of latitude (see Map 76451). Within this great expanse (456,000 square miles) was encompassed a wide variety of topographic features lacking any physical unity and a population that was not ethnically homogeneous (the ratio of Han Chinese to Mongols was about 9 to 1). Economic integration of the widely dispersed resources was manifestly impractical. More importantly, as a single military region with a vital missile installation in the west and two critical approach corridors to the Soviet Union in the east, IMAR, before administrative reorganization, would probably have been extremely difficult to defend.

Chinese assessment of the military threat to IMAR during the Sino-Soviet border clashes perhaps offers the best explanation of the timing of the administrative changes. If accompanied by a realignment of military regions, these changes would significantly improve China's defensive posture. Regardless of the military situation, the shifting of subprovincial units to adjacent provinces

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COMMUNIST CHINA
ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS
1968



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simplifies administration, tightens control, and permits greater regional economic integration. The Chinese Communists have not been reluctant to create, dissolve, or alter administrative units for such reasons in the past, and they will probably continue to do so in the future.

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